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# WHAT FRANCE DID FOR AMERICA

## MEMOIRS OF MARSHAL COUNT DE ROCHAMBEAU

TRANSLATED BY M. W. E. WRIGHT

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### II

M. DE LA PEYROUSE returned from Boston early in February. He brought us the first and only dispatches we had received from France since our departure. We learned that my son and he had found, on their arrival at Versailles, that M. de Sartines had tendered his resignation as Minister of Marine, and had been succeeded by M. de Castries; that the Minister of War was on the point of following his example; that the Queen Empress had terminated her royal and glorious career; that the English, having declared war to the Dutch, were taking them by surprise in all their possessions in which they were unprotected, and that France was making active preparations to send out both military and naval forces to their assistance; and, lastly, that all these circumstances would not allow of further efficacious attention being paid to the wants of America. The King, however, ordered M. de la Peyrouse to return immediately to America in the most swift sailing frigate at Brest, and take with him fifteen hundred thousand francs, which had been deposited at Brest for the last six months to be carried out with the second division. His Majesty further directed that Colonel Rochambeau should be detained till he could determine in council on the reply to be made to the request of the Americans.

After the return of our fleet, Arnold was reinforced in Virginia by a detachment of three thousand men from New York, in command of General Philipps. The English squadron put into New York to repair their three vessels, which had been damaged; and the Chevalier Destouches proceeded to repair the French ship the *Conquérant* at Rhode Island. Lafayette proceeded by land to join the Baron de Stuben and the various detachments of militia which the State of Virginia had set on foot.

Our squadron being again fit for sea, he felt anxious to make an attack on Penobscot; he was earnestly solicited to do so by the merchants and State of Boston; this fortress, occupied by the English at

the northern extremity, being a harbour for pirates and rovers of the most audacious description. General Washington did not approve of this plan, and gave to understand to the Chevalier Destouches that, for an object of very little consequence, he would endanger his fleet in a gulf where, after a disastrous combat, he would find no port of refuge. The fate of an expedition, which had sailed two years before from Boston, and of which the troops and flotilla which accompanied them were destroyed in the river of Penobscot, was a fit warning on the present occasion. We also were informed that the English fleet had completed their repairs, and had moreover been reinforced at New York by all the fifty-gun ships which could be spared from different other stations; it was therefore found impossible for the French fleet to put to sea under such circumstances, as it would have had to contend against an enemy which these reinforcements had rendered far superior, and which seemed fully determined to combine all its offensive operations against the State of New York. By the draft of these various detachments it stripped the garrison of New York, and, consequently, a smaller number of troops being sufficient for the safety of our ships at Rhode Island, I proposed to General Washington to proceed by land to the River Hudson, opposite New York, so as to enable him to reinforce Lafayette in Virginia with a detachment of his army. There were two motives, however, which prevented the execution of this plan for the present; in the first place, the preparations indispensable for victualling the army, and next, the necessity of waiting for the assistance, whatever it might be, which we expected would be brought by my son on his return, and which it would be highly advantageous we should receive before we should proceed, particularly if the affairs of the south did not become too pressing. General Washington received our offer with gratitude; but did not conceive the affairs of the south to be of such urgency as to require him to avail himself of it before we should have accomplished the two above objects. He, however, detached the troops of the Pennsylvania confederacy, to proceed forthwith, in command of General Vaine, to join General Lafayette.

Lord Cornwallis allowed but a short time to his troops to rest, during the months of April and May, in the neighborhood of Cape Fear. In the meantime, General Green marched by Hillsborough towards Camden and South Carolina, to attack Lord Randon, who had remained in that state with a small division to protect it. He had hoped, by this movement, to oblige Lord Cornwallis to retreat, but, as by this manœuvre he left the State of Virginia unprotected, Lord Cornwallis took advantage of this to quit his quarters, and, by a rapid march, cross the Roenoke at Halifax, and from thence join Generals Philipps and Arnold at Petersburg, in Virginia.

My son arrived at Boston on the 8th of May, on board the frigate the *Concorde*, in company with M. de Barras, who had been appointed to the command of this squadron, *vice* le Chevalier de Ternay.

We were informed by them that they had seen sail from Brest a numerous fleet, commanded by M. de Grasse; that this fleet had orders to divide as soon as it should reach the coast of Spain off Madrid, and proceed with the Bailli de Suffren to the assistance of the Cape of Good Hope, and to reinforce our fleet in the East Indies; that the Count de Grasse, as soon as he had passed south of the Azores, was to detach a small convoy of six hundred recruits under escort of the *Sagittaire*, as the only assistance which could be then afforded to North America; and, lastly, that the money intended for the naval and land forces was conveyed partly by the *Sagittaire*, and partly by the frigate which had M. de Barras on board. My dispatches stated, which was at the same time declared to Congress by his Majesty's minister, that different circumstances, among others that of an English fleet, superior in number, cruising off the port of Brest, had prevented the sailing of the second division in the preceding year; but that, in order that America should not be deprived of the assistance which had been provided for her, and which France had no desire to profit by, government had come to the determination to send money in lieu of troops, and that for that purpose a sum of six millions had been voted, with which General Washington might provide for the wants of the American army. The same dispatches contained a confidential message to me alone, stating that the Comte de Grasse had received orders to proceed with his division, in July or August, to relieve the squadron under M. de Barras; and that the latter, in the event of my marching into the interior of the continent to join General Washington, was to proceed back immediately to Boston. Rhode Island was considered unsafe without land forces to protect the anchorage of our ships. The government proposed that I should undertake an expedition to the Northern States, either to Penobscot, Terre Neuve, or Halifax; leaving me, however, to concert with General Washington some other operation better proportioned to our forces, and which might be protected by the very short station which the Comte de Grasse would have to make in our seas. Of the dispatches conveyed to me, those of the oldest date were from M. de Montbarrey, and those more recent, from M. de Ségur, who had succeeded him as Minister of War; the latest were from M. de Castries, who was at Brest when the fleet had sailed. My private letters informed me, that if I had been in France the King would have appointed me Minister of War. My ambition had never aspired to such an important function; but I must confess, when I reflect on these scanty resources and the distressing predicament to which I was reduced, this was the only moment of my life that I regretted it. It became urgent, however, that I should get out of my present embarrassing situation, and do my best for the service of the two nations. As soon, therefore, as I had fully deciphered my dispatches, my first step was to request an interview of General Washington; and he accordingly appointed to meet me at Wethersfield, near Hartford, on the 20th of May. Count

de Barras was prevented joining the conference, by the English fleet making its appearance near his ships on the eve of his departure. General Washington came in company of General Knox and Brigadier-General Duportail, and I with the Chevalier de Chatelus. General Washington, during this conference, had scarcely another object in view but an expedition against the island of New York, and which he persisted in considering the most capable of striking a death-blow to British domination in America. He was aware of the enemy's forces having been thinned at this place by the detachments which had been drafted from its garrison, and sent to the south, and thought, on the assurance of several pilots, that our ships might easily pass the bar of the harbour without being lightened. He considered an expedition against Lord Cornwallis, in Chesapeake Bay, as quite a secondary object, to which there was no necessity of diverting our attention until we were quite certain of our inability to accomplish the former. After some slight discussion, it was settled, however, that as soon as the recruits, with the small convoy of the *Sagittaire*, should join, the French corps should proceed to unite itself to the American army opposite the island of New York, to which the combined army should then approach as near as possible, and there wait until we should hear from M. de Grasse, to whom a frigate was to be immediately dispatched.

General Washington wrote immediately the result of this conference to General Sullivan, a member of Congress. His letters were intercepted; it is believed, and all the papers repeated the report, that he spoke in those letters of the projected attack on the New York islands, with a view only to mislead the enemy's general, and that, consequently, he was very glad that the letters had fallen into the hands of the latter. There is no need of such fictions to convey the glory of this great man to posterity. His wish was really then to attack New York, and we should have carried the plan into execution if the enemy had continued to draft troops from its garrison, and if the French navy could have been brought to our assistance. But what completely deceived the English general, was a confidential letter written by the Chevalier de Chatelus to the French representative at Congress, wherein he boasted of having artfully succeeded in bringing round my opinion to concur with that of General Washington; stating, at the same time, that the siege of the island of New York had been at length determined upon, and that our two armies were on the march for that city, and that orders had been sent off to M. de Grasse to come with his fleet and force his way over the bar of Sandyhook to the mouth of the harbour of New York. He also complained bitterly and in rather uncouth language, of the little resource left to a man of parts over the imperative disposition of a general, who was eager of command. The English officer who had charge of every branch of the spying department sent me a copy of the intercepted missive, and, by so doing, his intention had not been

most assuredly to set my wits at ease. I sent for the Chevalier de Chatelus; showed him the letter, and then threw it in the fire, and left him a prey to his own remorse. Of course, I did not endeavour to undeceive him, and, in the sequel, we shall see to what extent this general officer had been made the confidant of the real project which I proposed to the Count de Grasse.

When I returned to Newport, I was much grieved to see our navy preparing to retire to Boston, as soon as the French corps should quit the island for the continent. The port of Boston, although within thirty leagues of Newport by land, is more than a hundred leagues distant by sea, on account of the immense turn that must be made to clear the Nantucket Sands. Boston lies below wind, and might have delayed for a whole month the junction of our fleet to that of M. de Grasse. I felt the inconvenience of the distance the more, as I was obliged to leave him the care of the whole of our heavy artillery, which we could not possibly encumber ourselves with on the tedious march we were about to enter upon; our field-batteries were already nearly as much as we could contrive to drag with us. I proposed to Admiral Barras to hold a council of war, composed of both naval and military general and superior officers, as our instructions implied whenever circumstances should require. M. de Barras having consented, the council assembled, and discussed whether, considering the weakness of the garrison, from the large detachments sent to the south, the French squadron would be in safety at Rhode Island, when left, after the departure of the principal body of the French troops, with a detachment of five hundred men, in command of M. de Choisy, and a thousand strong of American militia, to occupy the forts erected to protect its anchorage.

I take much pleasure in relating here of Admiral Barras a noble and generous repastee, which fully characterises the patriotic sentiments of that respectable officer. M. de la Villebrune called upon me to state whether or not I thought that M. de Grasse would bring his fleet into the North American seas: "Because," said he, "if he is really to come, I am of opinion that it would be proper that we should stay here, so as, on his arrival, to be prepared to act in conjunction with him as expeditiously as possible; but, in the contrary case, I think we are now acting in direct opposition to the instructions we have received from the council of France, and that, by so doing, we shall hereafter be obliged to abide by any fatal consequences which may arise, however unlikely this may be." Admiral Barras rose, and exclaimed, "No one, more than I, feels interested in the arrival of M. de Grasse. He was my junior in the service, he has lately been raised to the rank of lieutenant-general, but as soon as I be apprized of his arrival, I will hasten to join him, and place myself under his orders. I will serve through this campaign, but not through a second one." This sentiment, replete with such noble feelings, carried the question, which was voted unanimously in the affirmative, without the

opinion of the generals on the secret of the operations being further consulted.

I immediately commenced the composition of my dispatches to M. de Grasse, which were to be conveyed to him by the *Concorde*, as soon as the latter vessel's preparations for sea should be completed. I pointed out to him the state of distress of the Southern States, and that of Virginia in particular; which, in the event of an attack on the part of Lord Cornwallis, would have but the small body of troops in command of General de Lafayette to oppose to him, and then even the defence would depend solely on able manœuvres and the nature of the country, intercepted by wide rivers. I included the articles of the conference at Wethersfield. I observed to him that he was better able than I to judge of the practicability of an attack upon New York, as, under nearly similar circumstances, M. d'Estaing, under whose orders he (M. de Grasse) had served, that officer had made the most advantageous offers of money to induce, but in vain, his pilots to guide his ships over the bar of its harbour. I then suggested, as my own opinion, the propriety of attempting an expedition to Chesapeak against the army of Lord Cornwallis, and which I considered more practicable, and less expected by the enemy, on account of the distance of our positions. I begged of him to intercede with the governors of San Domingo to let us have the French brigade, under the orders of M. de Saint-Simon, intended for an expedition against the Spaniards, but which I intimated would probably not be wanted during the campaign. I begged him also to raise a loan of twelve hundred thousand francs in our colonies, to insure the success of the expedition, and I concluded by entreating him to send the frigate back immediately, so that, on the receipt of his reply, I might take the earliest opportunity to combine our march with that of General Washington, so as to proceed by land as expeditiously as possible, and join him at any stipulated part of Chesapeak.

A packet was sent to General Washington during the conference at Wethersfield, containing dispatches from Lord George Germaine to General Clinton, and dated 7th February and 7th March, which had not been figured, and had been intercepted by an American corsair. They tended to throw much light on the plans of the English in this campaign; of which the object seemed, from their contents, to have been nothing less than the conquest of the whole of the southern states, and the reduction of General Washington to the north of the River Hudson. In these dispatches, the English minister spoke in the most opprobrious terms of the American forces, and upbraided General Clinton, stating that, if, as he had said, there were in the King's service more American royalists than there were rebels in Washington's army, it was very extraordinary that he should let that rebellion last so long. He mentioned the French corps, but only to assure the English general that no preparations were being made in France to send out the second division, and that the first would

have quite enough to do to uphold and protect its little squadron at Newport. He did not forget to observe the precarious state of the finances of Congress; and in this his calculations were so near the truth, that, at the period at which the conference took place at Wethersfield, the paper currency, after having been reduced to as low as a thousand to one, was at length completely annulled by a resolution of Congress.

General Green, in making his way as far as Cambden, had been repulsed by a sortie, manœuvred by Lord Randon at the end of April; but General Marion, an American, had reduced Fort Watson within the communication of the enemy; so that General Green still had the appearance of maintaining himself with success in South Carolina. The situation of Virginia was quite different. Lord Cornwallis, having assembled his entire forces, forming together an army of eight thousand men, pressed hardly on the Marquis de La Fayette, who had no chance left but to retire from one river to another, to fall back on General Vaine, who was marching up to his assistance with the confederacy of Pennsylvania.

The day after the council, in which it was resolved to leave the squadron at Rhode Island, I embarked with the army to proceed to Providence, there to await the assistance of our recruits, which I hoped would be conveyed under escort of the *Sagittaire*, or march to the south without these recruits, if the intelligence from that quarter should become more alarming. We at length received the specie and the drafts of recruits all safe, although part of the convoy had been dispersed. Having left the greater part of these drafts in command of M. de Choisy to protect our ships, the French corps marched, on June 18th, towards the River Hudson, to join the army of Washington. We received on the way information of a successful attack by General Green on Lord Randon's communication, and in consequence of which, the latter had been compelled to quit Cambden, and retreat to Charlestown. The intelligence from Virginia continued unfavorable, and contributed to slacken our march. General Washington having learned that the enemy had divided its forces into several camps, and had sent off a strong detachment to the Jerseys, thought the opportunity favourable to attempt an attack upon Fort Washington, at the entrance of New York Island, and, if possible, take possession of it by a *coup de main*; he accordingly marched on the 1st of July, with the bulk of his army, to assist General Lincoln, to whose command he had entrusted the expedition. He wrote, requesting me to double my march with De Lauzun's corps and the first half brigade, so as to operate a junction with him, if necessary. General Lincoln was encountered by a strong foraging party, which had left New York on the same morning; he fell back in good order on the head of General Washington's columns, which stopped the enemy in front, whilst the squadrons of De Lauzun's cavalry threatened its flank. The detachment was therefore driven



hastily back to New York, and no loss of consequence was sustained on either side.

The admirable expedition with which we had proceeded to join them, and the fine discipline of our troops, produced a most favourable effect upon our allies. The two armies were united in camp at Philippsburgh, three leagues from Kingsbridge, the enemy's first post in the Island of New York. This movement produced the effect that had been anticipated; it retained at New York General Clinton; who, by our dispatches, we were aware, had received orders to embark with a body of troops and proceed, by Maryland and Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, to reduce General Washington, east of the River Hudson. At the same time, it obliged Lord Cornwallis to retire from the interior of Virginia, and proceed to the entrance of Chesapeake Bay, and there, according to the same instructions, to take up a permanent and fortified position. A few days after we had joined the army of our allies, we received intelligence of Lord Cornwallis retrograding by James River to Richmond, and from thence to Williamsburgh, four leagues from New York.

We were informed at the same time of the arrival at Charlestown, from Cork, in Ireland, of a convoy of three thousand recruits, and that a similar reinforcement was expected at New York, together with the garrison of Pensacola, sent by the Spaniards. The two divisions of General Washington and my own formed together but nine thousand men, which comparatively small force began already to annoy the enemy.

The forced marches of the French corps had rendered their victualling very difficult, and a flotilla, which the enemy had sent up the Hudson, captured a vessel laden with four days' rations of bread intended for the French. The allowance of our soldiers was, in consequence, reduced to four ounces per diem, rice and a supplementary allowance of meat being given to them instead of their full allowance of bread; but they submitted to these privations as cheerfully as their officers had undergone the fatigue of a tedious march performed on foot and at the head of their troops. We sent a battery of twelve pounders and mortars, in command of Captain Verton, to the most narrow part of the river to await the return of the British flotilla, and the latter met with such a warm reception that I should think it had no desire to attempt such another expedition.

We next proceeded to reconnoitre minutely every part of the works of New York, and the adjacent islands; our respective engineers levied off hand plans of them. We were protected in our operations by a detachment of five thousand men in command of the Chevalier de Chatelus and General Lincoln. The whole continent was afterwards cleared of the outposts of American refugees, which had long infested it, and all who had not time to embark were either killed or taken by our aides-de-camp, who had joined the American dragoons who escorted us. Many shots were poured upon us from the

fortifications of New York, as well as from all the small men-of-war stationed around it. This active cannonading had no other effect than that which I desired, namely: of diverting the whole attention of the enemy to this principal bulk of its forces.

In this reconnoitring expedition, we took occasion to try the experiment of the American method of fording the rivers with cavalry by assembling their horses, like the herds of these animals in their wild state. We had crossed over to a small island, separated from Long Island, on which the enemy had posted themselves, by an inlet of the sea, of which we were anxious to ascertain the width. Whilst our engineers were, accordingly, performing this geometrical operation, we fell asleep, overcome with fatigue, beneath a hedge, within cannon range of the enemy's ships. The first to awaken by the wizzing of the balls which they fired down upon us to impede our operations, I hastened to call General Washington, and to remind him that we had forgotten the time of the tide. We quickly returned to the Mill Dam, on which we had crossed the inlet of the sea which separated us from the main land; but we found it overflowed. Two small boats were brought to us, in which we jumped with our saddles and other accoutrements; two American dragoons then led their horses, who were known as good swimmers, into the sea, and the remainder quickly followed, excited by the cracking of the whip by some dragoons on the other shore, to whom, by this time, our boats had returned. This manœuvre, which lasted nearly an hour, was, fortunately for us, unseen by the enemy.

On our return we received intelligence of the continuation of the retreat of Lord Cornwallis; La Fayette was following him up with precaution, and had given the command of his van-guard to General Vain, a brave but very ardent officer. The latter had succeeded in a first attack on Cornwallis' rear, but was repulsed in a second attempt with the loss of his cannon. Lord Cornwallis proceeded down River James as far as Portsmouth, from whence, after having reconnoitred this position, which he found unsuitable to his purpose, he proceeded up the River York, to York and Gloucester, where he established himself on the right and left banks of the river, which he made serve as a port for his ships to ride in safety.

The convoy of three thousand English recruits, announced at New York, arrived there on the 11th of August, and, together with the garrison of Pensacola, carried the effective of the enemy, in that island, to more than twelve thousand men, notwithstanding the numerous detachments that had been drafted to the south.

It was under these circumstances that the Count de Grasse, after having completed a cruising expedition of little import off the Antilles, and in which he had only taken the island of Tabago, arrived at Saint Domingo: he there found the frigate with my dispatches; he immediately communicated the latter to the Commandant of San Domingo and to M. de Solano, the Spanish Admiral, who both con-

curred with my plan of expedition against the army of Lord Cornwallis. They contributed towards it as much as they could; the former by lending us, for three months, the corps of three thousand men, under M. de Saint-Simon; and the latter by forwarding the twelve hundred thousand francs, which we needed for the expedition, to be taken up by the Count de Grasse, as he should pass off the Havana. M. de Grasse sent the frigate off immediately, and, on the 5th of August, I received his reply, whereby he informed me that he would be in Chesapeak Bay at the end of August, with all the means that I had requested of him. He concluded by stating that the period of his station would be up on the 15th of October; but he prolonged his stay the necessary time to complete this important expedition.

As soon as I had communicated this reply to General Washington, I concerted, with M. de Barras, the most expeditious means of effecting his junction with M. de Grasse, and of bringing to my assistance the heavy ordnance and the detachment in command of M. de Choisy. In the mean time, General Washington prevailed on two thousand troops of the Northern States to accompany him to the South, and unite with the troops under La Fayette. One hundred thousand livres, which remained in the coffers of the French corps, were divided among the two armies.

They commenced moving on the 19th of August, and we retrograded three days' march to ascend the Hudson, which we crossed at Kingsferry, and under protection of the American forts. General Washington left three thousand men on the left shore, in command of General Heats, to cover Westpoint and the Northern States. We then proceeded down the right shore in sight of States Island in advance of Chatham, where we established ovens and commenced victualling so as to feign an attack on New York by States Island, which doubly excited the anxiety of the enemy's General. M. de Villemansy, Commissary of War, executed this operation with remarkable dexterity. But turning off on a sudden to the right, towards the reverse of the mountains which divide the interior of Jersey State from its districts on the seashore, we led our armies to the Delaware: we were fortunate enough to find its water low, and were able to ford it near Trenton. It was not until then that the English general could have seen clearly into our intended plans; but it was then too late to impede them, provided M. de Grasse had proceeded to Chesapeak Bay at the period he promised he would. The two armies continued their march through Philadelphia, where they filed off in presence of the Congress assembled to review them. It was at the latter place that we were informed of the arrival of Admiral Hood at New York, where he had joined Admiral Graves, and sailed with due expedition for Chesapeak Bay. This disconcerting intelligence was counterbalanced by the report, which reached us at the same time from Baltimore, a town situated at its further extremity, of the arrival off the mouth of Chesapeak of M. de Grasse with 26 sails

of the line. We hastened our march at the head of our respective vanguards; and, on arrival at the mouth of the Elk, we found an officer bearer of dispatches from M. de Grasse, and who had reached thither about an hour before.

There were yet, however, other difficulties to surmount: the English, in their different incursions, had destroyed nearly all the American boats, so that we were scarcely able to muster a sufficient number to embark more than two thousand men, and the latter number would hardly include the two van-guards, consisting of the Grenadiers and Chasseurs of the two armies. The two Viomenil proceeded onward with the army by land, following the shore of the bay as far as Baltimore and Annapolis; General Washington and myself took the advance with a small escort, and, by forced marches of sixty miles a day, we reached Williamsburgh on the 14th of September, and found there the La Fayette and St-Simon divisions, who had taken up a good position together to await our arrival. Lord Cornwallis was intrenching his troops at Gloucester and York, he had barred the river with his ships, born up under the protection of his out-works, and had sunken several to bar the passage of the canal.

The people at Williamsburgh were much alarmed at the sight of the enemy's fleet at a naval action, which had been fought on the 5th of September, and of which the firing had been distinctly heard, and though, last not least, at the sight again of two English frigates, which had put into the bay. At length, in the night of the 14th to the 15th, we received a letter from M. de Grasse, informing us that an English fleet of twenty sails had appeared on the 15th off Cape Charles; that although fifteen hundred of his sailors were employed in disembarking the troops of M. de Saint-Simon in River James, he had not hesitated a moment in cutting his cables and bearing down upon the enemy with twenty-four ships for action; that Graves, having got to windward, the van-guard of M. de Bougainville had come up with the English fleet, which he treated rather roughly; that M. de Grasse had chased it for a short time, and then had made for the bay, where he found M. de Barras with his fleet; that the latter, having sailed from Newport with our heavy artillery, which he had convoyed with safety, had put into the bay on the 10th; that he had there encountered and captured the two British frigates; that he had immediately sent off M. de Barras' ten transports, with the two latter frigates, together with the other prizes made by his army, to take in at Annapolis the troops in command of M. de La Villebrune. The latter officer had joined Viomenil, and with combined activity, they reached Jamestown on the 25th, and our armies landed on the next and following day.

We left Williamsburgh on the 28th of September at day-break, and proceeded direct to York. I commenced investing with the French troops, from the upper part of the river down as far as the marshes near the residence of Colonel Nelson, taking advantage of

the woods, the curtains, and the marshy creeks, to confine the enemy within pistol-shot of their out-works. The three French brigades encamped very near, but under cover of the enemy's fire by the nature of the ground. Viomenil commanded the grenadiers and chasseurs of the van-guard, and our investing operations were effected without the loss of a single man. On the same day, General Washington was obliged to double in our rear, and to halt on the brink of the marshes, of which all the bridges had been broken up; he employed the rest of the day and the ensuing night in repairing them. On the 29th, the American army crossed the marshes, leaning its left on their borders, and its right on the River York. The investing of this place was now as complete and restrained as it possibly could be. De Lauzun's infantry, on landing, proceeded with their Colonel to join his division of cavalry, which I had sent by Tarre to take up a position on the road to Gloucester, and place itself at the disposition of Brigadier-General Voueden, who had in command a body of American militia. The whole of the legion had assembled by the 28th, the day of the investing of York.

On the night of the 29th to the 30th, the enemy, fearing an attack by surprise in the very extensive position in which they had entrenched themselves, abandoned the entrenched camp at Pigeon-hill, and confined themselves within the walls of their fortifications. The whole day of the 30th was employed by us in establishing ourselves in the outworks abandoned by the enemy, and by so doing we were enabled to confine them within a much smaller circle, and thereby secure an imminent advantage over them.

At this period, we were informed that Arnold had been sent at the close of the month of August on a plundering expedition to New London in Connecticut, in which, unfortunately, he succeeded but too fully, as, after having killed the brave Colonel Lidger, who had the defence of this port with the garrison of militia, he burned the town with a part of the merchant ships in its harbour; but this diversion tended in no way to impede our operations. We received intelligence, at the same time, of the arrival at New York of Admiral Digby, with three ships of the line, and a body of troops on board with Prince William Henry, one of the King of England's sons, who had been sent out by the Court to retake possession of the Government of Virginia; we were informed that this farther assistance of land and naval forces had enabled General Clinton to embark part of his army on board the English fleet, consisting of twenty-six sail, besides several fifty-gun ships and a few fire ships; and we were also informed that active preparations were making at New York to second this new attempt to succor Cornwallis, but which, in the extremity to which the latter was reduced, was too tardy to be efficient.

On the 30th we had dispatched M. de Choisy to M. de Grassé to ask for a detachment of the garrison of the ships, to reinforce M. de Lauzun in the county of Gloucester; M. de Grasse gave him eight

hundred men, with which he marched on the 3d of October to invest Gloucester more closely, and take up a position nearer. Tarleton happened to be thereabouts with four hundred horse and two hundred infantry on a foraging expedition. De Lauzun's legion, backed by a corps of American militia, attacked him so vigorously that he was put to flight with his detachment and was obliged to put back with a severe loss. After this skirmish, M. de Choisy carried his advanced posts as far as within a mile of Gloucester. The trenches were opened in the two attacks, above and below York River, in the night of the 6th to the 7th of October. That on the right was cut to a length of six or seven hundred toises, and was flanked with four redoutes. It was executed without any loss being sustained, because we commenced our works in the left trench, which, although the false attack, diverted nevertheless the whole attention of the enemy. The forces which the place contained, and the disposition of the men who commanded it, required us to conduct these attacks with much science and precaution. I cannot proceed further without passing the greatest eulogium on MM. Duportail and de Querenet, who commanded the engineers at the breach, and on M. D'Aboville and General Knox, who commanded the artillery of the two nations. The American army took charge of the trenches on the right, and the French of those in the centre and on the left.

I must render the Americans the justice to say, that they conducted themselves with that zeal, courage, and emulation, with which they were never backward, in the important part of the attack entrusted to them, and the more so as they were totally ignorant of the operations of a siege.

We set fire with our batteries to one of the enemy's men-of-war, and to three transports which had anchored with the design of attacking us in the rear.

During the night of the 14th to the 15th, the trenches were relieved by the regiments of Gatinois and Royal Deux-Ponts, in command of Baron de Viomenil; and we next resolved to attack the redoutes on the left of the enemy. General Washington entrusted to La Fayette that of the right, and I entrusted that of the left to M. de Viomenil with the French. Four hundred grenadiers came out at the head of this attack, commanded by M. Guillaume of the regiment of Deux-Ponts, and by M. de l'Estrapade, Lieutenant-Colonel of the Regiment of Gatinois. M. de Viomenil and La Fayette made such a vigorous attack, that the redoutes were carried sword in hand at the same moment. The greatest part of the troops who defended them were killed, wounded, or taken prisoners. The lodgement was effected by the junction of these redoutes by communication practised to the right of our second parallel.

The nature of the position of these redoutes allowed of the erection of two extra batteries, by the addition of which Lord Cornwallis's army was now completely hemmed in, and from which also

we were able to pour in ricochet projectiles to the body of the place, which was within such a limited range that the effect must have been most tremendous. Count Guillaume, of the regiment of Deux-Ponts, was wounded, as were also Charles de Lameth, Adjutant-General, and M. de Gimet, aide-de-camp to La Fayette.

I will relate here a circumstance which does much honour to the bravery of the French grenadiers. The grenadier regiment of Gatinois, which had been formed of that of Auvergne, had been chosen to open the attack; as soon as it was decided upon, I said to them: "My brave fellows, if I should want you to-night, I trust you will not have forgotten that we serve together in the regiment of *Auvergne sans tache*, an honourable appellation which it has since its creation." They replied that, if I would give its former name to their regiment, they would die to the last man of them. They kept their word, rushed to the attack like lions, and nearly one third of them died the death of the brave. M. de Sireuil, a captain in the regiment, was mortally wounded to the universal regret of his comrades. The King, on my request, immediately put his sign-manual to the royal ordinance by which the former title of Royal Auvergne was restored to this distinguished body of men.

During the night of the 15th to the 16th, the enemy made a sortie with six hundred chosen troops, but, finding all our redoubts well manned and on the alert, fell upon a battery of the second parallel, and spiked four of its pieces. The Chevalier de Chatelus marched up with the reserve, and finally repulsed the sortie. The four pieces, which had been badly spiked, were rendered fit for service six hours afterwards, and were again used against the place, by our artillery in command of General d'Aboville. The Marquis de Saint-Simon was wounded at the trenches on the following day, but held out his four and twenty hours, refusing constantly to be relieved.

At length, on the 17th, the enemy offered to parley, and a capitulation was signed on the 19th of October, by which Lord Cornwallis and his army surrendered as prisoners of war. The French and the Americans took possession of the two bastions at noon. Two hours afterwards the garrison filed off, in battle array, between the two armies, and afterwards deposed their arms in piles, together with a few colours. Lord Cornwallis being sick, General Ohera filed off at the head of the garrison. As he came up to where I was standing, he presented his sword to me; I pointed to General Washington, who stood opposite to me at the head of the American army, and told him that the French army being only an auxiliary on this continent, it devolved on the American General to tender him his orders.

Colonel Laurens, the Vicomte de Noailles, and M. de Granchain, had been appointed, by their respective Generals, to draw up the articles of this capitulation, in concert with other superior officers of Lord Cornwallis's army. It was signed by General Washington, the Count de Rochambeau, and M. de Barras, the latter for and in the

name of the Count de Grasse, and was immediately put into execution. We found eight thousand prisoners; seven thousand were regular troops and the remainder sailors, two hundred and fourteen pieces of cannon, seventy-five of which of cast metal, and twenty-two colours. Among the prisoners should be included nearly two thousand and sick in the hospitals, all of whom were taken the greatest care of; the others were sent up the country.

I feel bound, on this occasion, to render justice to the zeal and activity of M. Blanchard, of the commissariat department, and Messrs. Coste and Robillard, officers of health, who, by their assiduous care and attention to the sick and wounded in the military hospital, both friends and foes, rendered essential service to humanity in the course of these three memorable campaigns.

I sent off the Duke de Lauzun and the Comte Guillaume, of the regiment of the Deux-Ponts, in different frigates, to carry the capitulation to France; and M. Tilman, aide-de-camp to General Washington, was sent by that general to Congress.

This affair had scarcely been brought to a conclusion, when the English squadron, consisting of twenty-seven sail, appeared, on the 27th October, off Cape Henry, having on board a corps of troops, in command of General Clinton. Having ascertained how totally unnecessary were now the reinforcements it conveyed, it immediately put to sea again. M. de Grasse's fleet set sail, on its return to the Antilles, on the 4th of November. The troops which had been borrowed of the Governor of San Domingo were sent back to him, and a small light squadron, of which the *Romulus* was the largest ship, was left at York, in command of M. de Villebrune, as being more suitable to the operations of the land forces, because it would be able to get up to a more narrow part of the rivers, so as, in case of need, to find safer moorings. General Washington returned with the detachment of troops of the Northern States to his quarters on the Hudson, opposite New York. He sent the troops lately in command of M. de La Fayette, to reinforce General Green in the south. The French remained at York, Gloucester, Hampton, and Williamsburgh, where they took up the quarters which the enemy had counted upon, and repaired the damage done to them by the operations of the siege.

(To be Concluded)